

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
NEWS RELEASE**



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**2012 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release # 58  
Summer Update # 6, Districts 1-6  
Districts Affected: Yukon Area**

**Assessment Projects**

Dall Point Test Fishery- 5.5-inch drift net project/YDFDA, ADF&G

The project completed operations on July 9 with a cumulative summer chum salmon CPUE of 1,338.88.

Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF)- 8.5-inch set net project/ADF&G, YDFDA

The LYTF concluded operations on July 15. The cumulative CPUE for the 2012 season is 7.10 which is well below the historic average of 22.57.

The Big Eddy Chinook salmon drift gillnet test fishery also completed operations on July 15 with a cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE of 366.55.

Summer Chum Drift Test Fishery- 5.5-inch drift net project/ADFG, YDFDA

The project completed operations on July 15 with a cumulative summer chum CPUE of 15,077.90 which is well above the historical median of 4,877.21.

Mountain Village Chinook Drift Test Fishery- 7.5-inch mesh drift net project/YDFDA, ATC, ADFG

The project completed operations on July 11 with a cumulative Chinook salmon CPUE of 1,742.49, which is above the (2010-2011) average of 1,106.82.

Andreafsky River weir/USFWS

The cumulative passage through July 15 is approximately 826 Chinook which is below the average of 2,835 for this date. The cumulative passage for summer chum is approximately 45,267 which is below the median of 48,178 fish for this date.

#### Pilot Station sonar project/ADFG

Chinook salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 103,753 through July 15, which is below the historical average of 145,403 for this date. It is also below the average of 129,850 for historical late years for this date. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 2.1 million which is above the historical median of 1.3 million for this date.

#### Anvik River sonar project/ADFG

The summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 397,458 through July 15, which is above the historical median of 359,772 for this date.

#### Gisasa River weir/USFWS

The cumulative passage through July 15 is approximately 649 Chinook which is below the average of 1,318 for this date. The cumulative passage for summer chum is approximately 50,979 which is above the median of 26,710 fish for this date.

#### Henshaw Creek Weir/TCC

The cumulative passage through July 15 is approximately 267 Chinook which is below the average of 448 for this date. The cumulative passage for summer chum is approximately 74,222 which is above the median of 24,620 fish for this date.

#### Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/Zuray

The cumulative expanded counts through July 15 is approximately 2,123 Chinook which is above the average of 1,734 for this date. The cumulative expanded counts for summer chum is approximately 1,034 which is above the median of 131 fish for this date.

#### Eagle Sonar/ADFG

The cumulative Chinook salmon passage at Eagle sonar is estimated to be approximately 416 through July 15.

#### Chena River Tower/ADFG

The cumulative expanded counts through July 15 are 183 Chinook salmon and 63 summer chum salmon.

*NOTE: Other assessment projects will be added as they become operational.*

#### Chinook and Summer Chum Age Composition

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.5-inch LYTF set nets through July 9 (Big Eddy) and July 5 (Middle Mouth) was 2% age-4, 28% age-5, 68% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. Females composed 60% of fish sampled. The sample size was 660 fish.

The Chinook salmon age composition from the 8.25-inch Big Eddy drift test fishery through July 6 was 2% age-4, 32% age-5, 64% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. Females composed 61% of fish sampled. The sample size was 218 fish.

The Chinook salmon age composition from the subsistence harvest collected by fishermen contracted by the Association of Village Council Presidents through June 19 in Districts 1 and 2 was 4% age-4, 56% age-5, 38% age-6, and 2% age-7 fish. Females composed 25% of fish sampled. The sample size was 485 fish.

The Chinook salmon age composition from the incidental commercial harvest through July 9 (Period 8) in District 1 was 19% age-4, 49% age-5, 31% age-6, and 1% age-7. Females composed 29% of fish sampled. The sample size was 533 fish.

The chum salmon age composition from the 5.5-inch LYTF drift nets through July 13 (Big Eddy) and July 5 (Middle Mouth) was 68% age-4, 27% age-5, and 5% age-6 fish. Females composed 55% of fish sampled. The sample size was 1,357 fish.

The chum salmon age composition from the commercial harvest through July 10 (Period 9) in District 1 was 71% age-4, 23% age-5, and 6% age-6 fish. Females composed 49% of fish sampled. The sample size was 709 fish.

## **Assessment**

Chinook salmon run timing continues to track considerably below historical averages. The Pilot Station sonar cumulative passage estimate of approximately 104,000 Chinook salmon through July 15 is well below the historical average of 145,000 for this date, and is also below the average passage estimates at this point for late run years, of approximately 130,000. Current data suggest the 2012 first quarter at Pilot Station sonar was approximately June 24. The median was approximately June 28 and the third quarter was approximately July 2. These dates are preliminary until the Chinook salmon run is completed. For late run years, on average more than 95% of the run had passed Pilot Station sonar by July 15. Based on historical late year run timing and current data, the 2012 Chinook salmon run size is coming in at the lower end of the preseason outlook estimate of 109,000, or potentially lower.

Currently, all escapement monitoring projects for Chinook salmon (Andreafsky River weir, Gisasa River weir, Henshaw Creek weir, Chena River tower) have estimated passages well below the historical average passage estimates for this date. The first Chinook salmon at Eagle sonar was detected on July 2, approximately 22 days after the first Chinook salmon passed by Pilot Station sonar. The Eagle sonar cumulative passage estimate of 400 through July 15 is well below the historical average of 5,500 for this date. It is still early for the escapement projects because of the late run timing, but due to the poor run size, escapements may be lower than historical averages in some or most escapement streams.

Genetic mixed stock analysis (MSA) on the third pulse of Chinook salmon past Pilot Station sonar (July 1 – 7) revealed that approximately 45% were Canadian-origin Chinook salmon suggesting the Canadian run size is weak and similar to 2008 and 2010. For more background

information on MSA for Yukon River Chinook salmon, please refer to the department's Gene Conservation Laboratory webpage for related documents and the latest updates ([http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.yukonchinook\\_baseline](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishinggeneconservationlab.yukonchinook_baseline)).

Summer chum salmon passage through July 15 at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 2.1 million, which is above the historical median of 1.3 million for this date. On average, historically more than 95% of the summer chum run had passed Pilot Station by July 15. Based on historical run timing, the summer chum run is on track with the upper end of the preseason outlook estimate of 1.5-2.0 million.

Based on the abundance of summer chum salmon, there was a commercial fishing season directed at summer chum salmon in Districts 1 and 2. Due to the conservation concern for Chinook salmon and to provide opportunity for a directed summer chum commercial fishery in Districts 1 and 2, no Chinook salmon were sold in any summer chum commercial openings. Any incidentally caught Chinook salmon have provided for subsistence use. Chinook salmon caught but not sold were required to be reported on fish tickets. Additionally, periods were mostly limited to the south mouth portion of District 1 and District 2 had 3 periods to date that only included portions of that district to protect Chinook salmon while targeting summer chum salmon. This Chinook and Summer chum salmon fishery is coming to an end in the lower river and will now be monitored for fall chum and coho salmon.

Additionally, in Subdistrict 4-A, thirteen commercial fishing periods have been announced through July 15. Commercial fishing gear is restricted to fish wheels only which must be manned at all times of operation. All Chinook salmon caught in the fish wheels must be immediately returned to the water alive.

### **Current Management**

Consistent with preseason management strategies, subsistence fishing periods have been canceled in Districts 1-4 and Subdistricts 5-A,B&C to protect the first and second pulses of Chinook salmon and similar actions are being implemented in Subdistrict 5-D based on migratory timing of Chinook salmon. Based on the assessment information to date, the Chinook salmon run is poor, and additional measures are being taken to conserve Chinook salmon for escapement. Following the pulse closures subsequent subsistence fishing periods have been reduced in time and gear restrictions have also been implemented in the Coastal District and Districts 1-4 in an effort to conserve Chinook salmon and allow subsistence fishermen the opportunity to target summer chum salmon.

The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: The Coastal District is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller

Districts 1 and 2: Subsistence salmon fishing are open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Fishermen may

use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

District 3: Subsistence salmon fishing in District 3 is open until 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, July 17, with gillnets restricted to a maximum mesh size of 6 inches. Beginning at 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, subsistence salmon fishing in District 3 will be open 7 days per week, 24 hours per day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Subdistrict 4-A-Lower (from  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Stink Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik and Grayling. Subdistrict 4-A-Lower will be open from 6:00 p.m. Sunday, July 15, until 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 17. This will be a 48-hour subsistence salmon fishing period with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size. Fish wheels must be equipped with a chute and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation.

Effective, 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, subsistence salmon fishing will return to the standard schedule of two 48-hour periods each week with gillnet and fish wheel restrictions discontinued. Subsistence salmon fishing periods will be from 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays until 6:00 pm Fridays, and from 6:00 p.m. Sundays until 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays.

Subdistrict 4-A-Upper: (from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk. In Subdistrict 4-A-Upper subsistence salmon fishing will be open for a 24-hour period from 6:00 p.m. Monday, July 16, until 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 17 and a 48-hour period from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, until 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 20. During these subsistence salmon fishing periods gillnets are restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size. Fish wheels must be equipped with a chute and all Chinook salmon caught in fish wheels must be returned to the water alive. Fish wheels must be closely attended while in operation.

The department will notify fishermen by July 20 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for this upper portion of Subdistrict 4-A.

Subdistricts 4-B&C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C is on a reduced fishing schedule. In Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C subsistence salmon fishing will be open from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, until 12:00 noon Thursday, July 19. These will be 18-hour subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The department will notify fishermen by July 20 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C. In Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C, fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Subdistricts 5-A,B&C: Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C is currently

closed and will remain closed until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 18. Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C will then be open for one 18-hour subsistence salmon fishing period, from 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, until 12:00 noon Thursday, July 19. The department will notify fishermen by July 20 concerning the next subsistence salmon fishing period and schedule for Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C.

In an effort to protect Chinook salmon as they pass through this long section of river, Subdistrict 5-D will be divided into three separate areas.

Subdistricts 5-D-Lower (from an ADF&G regulatory marker 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the Hadweenzic River and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the communities of Stevens Village and Beaver. Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed and will remain closed until further notice.

Subdistricts 5-D-Middle (from the Hadweenzic River upstream to 22 Mile Slough and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the community of Fort Yukon. Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed and will remain closed until further notice.

Subdistrict 5-D-Upper (from 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the communities of Circle, and Eagle. Subsistence salmon fishing will close at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, July 17, and will remain closed until further notice.

The department will notify fishermen by July 20 concerning the subsistence salmon fishing schedule for each portion of Subdistrict 5-D.

District 6: The subsistence salmon fishing schedule consists of two 42-hour fishing periods per week from 6:00 p.m. Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays and from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays.

The Old Minto Area: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Fridays until 6:00 p.m. Wednesdays.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day with gillnets restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size to conserve Chinook salmon. Effective 8:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 18, subsistence salmon fishing in Innoko River will be open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

## **Commercial Fishing**

The summer season commercial fishery is coming to an end in Districts 1 and 2. Ten commercial fishing periods occurred in District 1 and five commercial fishing periods occurred in District 2

to date. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest for Districts 1 and 2 combined is approximately 196,000 summer chum salmon, and 2,342 Chinook salmon have been reported as caught but not sold.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistrict 4-A

Thirteen commercial fishing periods have been announced through July 20. Commercial fishing gear is restricted to fish wheels only which must be manned at all times of operation. All Chinook salmon caught in the fish wheels must be immediately returned to the water alive.

Currently, Subdistrict 4-A is open for a 168-hour fishing period which is scheduled to close at 8:00 p.m. Friday, July 20.

The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest for Subdistrict 4-A through July 15 is approximately 34,500 summer chum salmon.

Fishermen will be notified by July 19 regarding additional commercial fishing periods.

Recorded fishery announcements and updates will be available 24 hours a day at 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Emmonak ADF&G office at 949-1320. The Emmonak ADF&G office will stand by on VHF channel 7A.

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